



TOOLBOX OF IDEAS

THREE-INDEX-CARD DISCUSSION

Goals: “Occasionally, it seems that no matter what you do to promote democracy, you end up with a class that is somehow unbalanced in a way that affects discussion. Too many boys and not enough girls (or vica versa), a group that is heterogeneous in social power, or simply a group with some introverts and some extroverts. In order to promote more equal sharing in these groups, I sometimes use a method I found in NCTE’s ‘Teacher’s Notes’ called the ‘three-index-card discussion’.”---Jeffrey Wilhelm, author of *“You Gotta Be the Book”* and *Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension*

Materials: index cards (teacher), copy of text being discussed and a pen or pencil (students)

Procedure:

- 1) Students place their desks in a circle
- 2) Students each receive three index cards.
- 3) Before the discussion, students are allowed to write a response statement on two of the cards that can only take up one side of the card and must cite a piece of the text they read and a response to the text (see back of this sheet). (You can have them do this at home, or they can have written about the text in some other way at home and use that writing for their cards)
- 4) Students are to save one card to be filled out during the discussion upon which they write a direct response/connection to someone else’s response that they hear.
- 5) Students are told that for each turn they take they must throw their card in the center of the circle.
- 6) All students must use all of their index cards.
- 7) Once a student has thrown in his/her card, he/she’s done. He/She can’t say anything else.